



GREEN SPRING GARDENS PARK

PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

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RECOMMENDED NATIVE HERBACEOUS PERENNIAL PLANTS FOR SHADE GARDENS IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Native plants are species that occur in the region in which they evolved. Therefore, they are uniquely adapted to local conditions. Native plants provide food and shelter for a myriad of birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Best of all, gardeners can feel the satisfaction of preserving a part of our natural and historical heritage while enjoying the beauty of native plants in the garden.

Hardy herbaceous perennial plants form little or no woody tissue and live for several years. Some of these plants are short-lived and may only live three years (e.g., wild columbine), while others can live for decades. They are a group of plants that gardeners are very passionate about because of their lovely foliage and flowers (with the exception of ferns), and wide variety of textures, forms, and heights. Most of these plants are deciduous and die back to the ground in the winter, although some species are semi-evergreen or evergreen (e.g., evergreen wild ginger or heartleaf).

Herbaceous perennial plants are a joy to garden with because they are easily moved to create new design combinations and provide an ever-changing scene in the garden. They are appropriate for a wide range of shade gardens, from more formal gardens to naturalistic woodland gardens.

The following are useful definitions:

- **Cultivar (cv.)** – a cultivated variety selected by humans and designated by single quotes (e.g., 'Purpurea'). A **variety (var.)** or **subspecies (subsp.)**, in contrast, is found in nature and is a subdivision of a species.
- **Full shade** – the amount of light under a dense deciduous tree canopy or beneath evergreens.
- **Naturalistic use** – native plants that, when properly sited, perform well with minimal care; best used in an informal design that suggests a natural landscape. Most native species can be used this way, but this is the best way to use some species with informal growth habits or certain species that reseed readily.
- **Part shade** – the amount of light in an area shaded part of the day, among deciduous trees with high branches, among deciduous trees with foliage that is not heavy, or among thinned deciduous woods.

The following is a list of native herbaceous perennial plants with ornamental value that perform well in shade gardens in the Washington, D.C. area. These plants tolerate or prefer varying degrees of shade. Most of these plants are native to Virginia; all plants listed are Virginia natives unless otherwise noted. Plants that are not native to Virginia are accompanied by the abbreviation of at least one state in the eastern United States they are native to. The list is divided into the following categories: a) herbaceous perennials, b) ferns, c) ornamental grasses, and d) ornamental sedges and rushes. Sedges and rushes resemble grasses, but they are in different plant families: Poaceae is the grass family, Cyperaceae is the

sedge family, and Juncaceae is the rush family. Most of these plants prefer a moist, well-drained site. Light requirements, special cultural requirements or tolerances, and if a plant is semi-evergreen or evergreen are noted in the comments column. Plants that require wet sites are not included. Help conserve native plant populations by buying only propagated plants: never buy plants collected from the wild. The Virginia Native Plant Society (www.vnps.org) and the Maryland Native Plant Society (www.mdflora.org) list nurseries that sell propagated native plants.

HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Aconitum uncinatum</i>	Wild Monkshood	Prefers rich, moist soil in light shade
<i>Actaea pachypoda</i>	Doll's Eyes, White Baneberry	Light shade to part shade
<i>Amsonia tabernaemontana</i> (<i>montana</i> is shorter than the species – not a true variety)	Eastern Bluestar	Full sun to light shade; reseeds readily in moist sites; tolerates dry sites
<i>Anemone virginiana</i>	Tall Anemone, Thimbleweed	Light shade to part shade; reseeds readily; tolerates dry sites; naturalistic use
<i>Antennaria plantaginifolia</i>	Plantain Pussytoes	Full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites; reseeds readily
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Wild Columbine	Full sun to part shade; allow to reseed: individual plants short-lived; tolerates dry sites
<i>Aralia racemosa</i>	Spikenard	Light shade to part shade; reseeds readily
<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>	Jack-in-the-Pulpit	Light shade to part shade; some reseeding; can go dormant in the summer; do not crowd these plants
<i>Aruncus dioicus</i>	Goatsbeard	Light shade to part shade
<i>Asarum arifolium</i> (<i>Hexastylis arifolia</i>) <i>A. canadense</i> <i>A. (Hexastylis) shuttleworthii</i> ('Callaway') <i>A. virginicum</i> (<i>Hexastylis virginica</i>)	Arrowleaf Wild Ginger, Arrowleaf Heartleaf Wild Ginger Mottled Wild Ginger, Largeflower Heartleaf Virginia Wild Ginger, Virginia Heartleaf	Evergreen; light shade to full shade for all species; evergreen species tolerate drier sites Deciduous; needs a moist site Evergreen Evergreen
<i>Aster divaricatus</i> (<i>Eurybia divaricata</i>) <i>A. cordifolius</i> (<i>Symphyotrichum cordifolium</i>) <i>A. macrophyllus</i> (<i>Eurybia macrophylla</i>)	White Wood Aster Heart-leaved Aster Large-leaved Aster	Light shade to full shade; tolerate dry sites; <i>A. divaricatus</i> & <i>A. cordifolius</i> are best used in naturalistic plantings, larger areas, &/or dry areas – reseed readily
<i>Astilbe biternata</i>	False Goatsbeard	Light shade to part shade
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh Marigold	Light shade to part shade in constantly moist or wet sites; spring ephemeral (summer dormant)

<i>Cardamine concatenata</i> (<i>Dentaria laciniata</i>) <i>C. (Dentaria) diphylla</i>	Cutleaf Toothwort Broad-leaved Toothwort	Light shade to part shade; spring ephemeral(summer dormant); naturalistic use; some reseeding
<i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i>	Blue Cohosh	Light shade to part shade
<i>Chelone obliqua</i> (<i>C. glabra</i> [white turtlehead] has white flowers – naturalistic use)	Pink Turtlehead	Full sun to part shade in moist or wet sites; some reseeding
<i>Chrysogonum virginianum</i> var. <i>virginianum</i> (var. <i>australe</i> ‘Eco Lacquered Spider’ is a more vigorous but blooms less – this var. native to NC & more southern states)	Green & Gold	Light shade to part shade (can take full sun in moist sites when taller plants shade it somewhat); need good drainage; best for naturalistic use
<i>Cimicifuga racemosa</i>	Black Snakeroot, Black Bugbane, Fairy Candles	Light shade to part shade; add gypsum or lime to provide calcium; some reseeding
<i>Claytonia virginica</i>	Spring Beauty	Light shade to full (summer) shade; spring ephemeral (summer dormant); naturalistic use
<i>Collinsonia canadensis</i>	Northern Horse Balm	Light shade to part shade; naturalistic use; some reseeding
<i>Coreopsis major</i>	Woodland Coreopsis	Full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites
<i>Dicentra eximia</i> Note: spring ephemeral (summer dormant) <i>D. cucullaria</i> (Dutchman’s breeches) - naturalistic use	Wild Bleeding Heart	Light shade to part shade; <i>D. eximia</i> tolerates dry sites & reseeds readily
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> (naturalized in VA; <i>E. laevigata</i> is the true VA native – much harder to grow & US endangered species)	Purple Coneflower	Full sun to light shade; tolerates dry sites; some reseeding
<i>Erigeron pulchellus</i>	Robin’s Plantain	Light shade to part shade; naturalistic use
<i>Eupatorium fistulosum</i> Note: two other Joe Pye weed species, <i>E. purpureum</i> & <i>E. maculatum</i> , are also VA natives; <i>E. (Conoclinium) coelestinum</i> (mistflower) – primarily for naturalistic use	Joe Pye Weed (hybrids such as ‘Gateway’ & ‘Big Umbrella’ are shorter than the species)	Full sun to light shade; moist or wet sites; reseeds readily
<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	Wild Geranium	Light shade to part shade
<i>Helianthus decapetalus</i> <i>H. divaricatus</i> <i>H. strumosus</i> (<i>H. angustifolius</i> [swamp sunflower] grows in full sun to light shade, & can tolerate wet sites; some reseeding)	Forest Sunflower Spreading Sunflower Roughleaf Sunflower	Full sun (moist site) to part shade; first 3 species tolerant of dry sites

<i>Heuchera americana</i> <i>H. villosa</i> ('Purpurea')	American Alumroot Hairy Alumroot	Light shade to part shade; <i>H. americana</i> more tolerant of dry sites; some reseeding
<i>Iris cristata</i> <i>I. virginica</i>	Dwarf Crested Iris Southern Blue Flag Iris	Light shade to part shade in dry or moist sites Full sun to light shade in moist or wet sites
<i>Jeffersonia diphylla</i>	Twinleaf	Light shade to part shade; add lime or gypsum to the soil; often goes dormant in summer; likes some sites & not others
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> Note: <i>L. siphilitica</i> (great blue lobelia) is another native (moist sites; some reseeding)	Cardinal Flower	Full sun to part shade in moist or wet sites; short-lived perennials; <i>L. cardinalis</i> reseeds readily
<i>Medeola virginiana</i>	Indian Cucumber Root	Light shade to part shade; naturalistic use
<i>Mertensia virginica</i>	Virginia Bluebells	Light shade to full (summer) shade; spring ephemeral (summer dormant); reseeds readily in moist locations
<i>Mitchella repens</i>	Partridgeberry	Light shade to full shade; tolerates dry sites; evergreen
<i>Monarda didyma</i> (red-flowered cultivars that are powdery mildew resistant – 'Jacob Cline' & 'Gardenview Scarlet' – possibly hybrids) <i>M. fistulosa</i> Note: <i>M. clinopodia</i> (basil bee balm) is similar to the above two species but white-flowered; <i>M. punctata</i> (eastern horse mint) is an unusual, short-lived perennial (likes dry soil)	Bee Balm Wild Bergamot	Full sun to light shade for best bloom (can grow in part shade); likes moist sites & can tolerate periodically wet sites Full sun to light shade; tolerates drier sites than the above; 'Claire Grace' & 'Violet Queen' (possibly a hybrid) are powdery mildew resistant cultivars; some reseeding
<i>Pachysandra procumbens</i> (native to WV, NC, etc.)	Alleghany Pachysandra	Light shade to full shade; semi-evergreen to evergreen
<i>Phlox divaricata</i> <i>P. glaberrima</i> (subsp. <i>triflora</i> , 'Anita Kistler' – selected in VA) <i>P. paniculata</i> & powdery mildew resistant cultivars such as 'Bright Eyes', 'David', 'Nicky', 'Katherine', & 'Shortwood' <i>P. stolonifera</i> ('Sherwood Purple' is the most vigorous cv.)	Wild Blue Phlox Smooth Phlox Garden Phlox Creeping Phlox	Light shade to part shade; some reseeding Full sun to light shade Full sun to light shade (less problems with true bugs feeding on plants in light shade); reseeds readily Full sun (moist site) to part shade; does not like crowding by other plants
<i>Physostegia virginiana</i> ('Vivid')	Obedient Plant	Full sun to light shade; tolerates periodically wet sites
<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>	Mayapple	Light shade to full shade; spring ephemeral (summer dormant); naturalistic use

<i>Polemonium reptans</i> (‘Blue Pearl’)	Jacob’s Ladder	Light shade to part shade; some reseeding (moist sites best)
<i>Polygonatum biflorum</i> var. <i>commutatum</i>	Smooth Solomon’s Seal	Light shade to full shade; tolerates dry sites; some reseeding
<i>Porteranthus trifolius</i> (<i>Gillenia trifoliata</i>) (Note: <i>P. stipulatus</i> [<i>G. stipulata</i>] is a more open plant)	Bowman’s Root	Full sun to light shade; <i>P. stipulatus</i> best for naturalistic use (<i>P. trifolius</i> more versatile); some reseeding
<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> (var. <i>speciosa</i> , ‘Goldsturm’) <i>R. laciniata</i> Note: two biennial to short-lived perennial species – <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> (black-eyed susan) & <i>R. triloba</i> (three-lobed coneflower)	Orange Coneflower Cutleaf Coneflower	Full sun to light shade; reseeds readily Full sun to light shade; needs moist site; best for naturalistic use; reseeds readily Full sun to light shade; <i>R. hirta</i> tolerates dry sites & reseeds some at Green Spring; <i>R. triloba</i> reseeds readily
<i>Salvia lyrata</i> (& purple-leaved forms)	Lyreleaf Salvia	Full sun to light shade; good for naturalistic use; tolerates dry sites; some reseeding
<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i> (‘Flore Pleno’ [‘Multiplex’] is a double-flowered form)	Bloodroot	Light shade to full shade; spring ephemeral (summer dormant) – especially in dry sites; reseeds readily
<i>Scutellaria serrata</i>	Showy Skullcap	Light shade to part shade; tolerates dry sites
<i>Sedum ternatum</i>	Wild Stonecrop	Light shade to part shade; tolerates dry sites; some reseeding
<i>Senecio aureus</i> (<i>Packera aurea</i>)	Golden Ragwort	Full sun to part shade; moist to periodically wet sites; reseeds readily; invasive in certain sites
<i>Silene stellata</i>	Starry Campion	Full sun to part shade; naturalistic use; tolerates dry sites
<i>Silphium asteriscus</i> <i>S. perfoliatum</i>	Southern Rosinweed Cup Plant	Full sun to light shade (<i>S. asteriscus</i> is the most shade tolerant); tolerate dry sites in shady areas; <i>S. perfoliatum</i> reseeds readily
<i>Sisyrinchium angustifolium</i>	Blue-eyed Grass	Light shade to part shade; naturalistic use best; some reseeding
<i>Smilacina racemosa</i> (<i>Maianthemum racemosum</i> subsp. <i>racemosum</i>) <i>S. stellata</i> (<i>Maianthemum stellatum</i>)	False Solomon’s Seal, Eastern Solomon’s Plume Star-flowered False Solomon’s Seal, Starry Solomon’s Plume	Light shade to part shade (<i>S. stellata</i> may tolerate more sun); some reseeding
<i>Solidago caesia</i> <i>S. flexicaulis</i> <i>S. sphacelata</i> ‘Golden Fleece’	Wreath Goldenrod Zigzag Goldenrod Golden Fleece Goldenrod	Light shade to part shade (‘Golden Fleece’ is also adapted to full sun); tolerate dry sites; <i>S. caesia</i> reseeds readily
<i>Spigelia marilandica</i> (may occur in southwestern VA – definitely native to NC, etc.)	Indian Pink	Light shade to part shade; prefers moist, rich soil
<i>Stokesia laevis</i> (NC native, etc.; ‘Klaus Jelitto’, ‘Purple Parasol’)	Stoke’s Aster	Full sun to light shade

<i>Stylophorum diphylum</i>	Yellow Wood Poppy	Light shade to part shade; reseeds readily; can be somewhat invasive in moist sites
<i>Thalictrum dioicum</i> <i>T. pubescens</i> <i>T. (Anemonella) thalictroides</i> Note: <i>Enemion biternatum</i> (false rue anemone) is similar to rue anemone (a spring ephemeral & low-growing) – has done well in rock gardens & along building foundations.	Early Meadow-rue Tall Meadow-rue Rue Anemone	Light shade to part shade; tolerates dry sites but prefers moist ones; naturalistic use Full sun to light shade; tolerant of wet sites; some reseeding Light shade to part shade; spring ephemeral (summer dormant)
<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i> var. <i>cordifolia</i> & <i>T. cordifolia</i> var. <i>collina</i> (<i>T. wherryi</i>)	Foamflower	Light shade to full shade; the first variety spreads by stolons & the second variety is a clumper; semi-evergreen
<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i> & hybrids such as ‘Concord Grape’ Note: <i>Tradescantia hirsuticaulis</i> is a nice NC native, etc., that is low growing, goes dormant in the summer, then comes back up again in late summer/early fall	Spiderwort	Full sun (moist site) to part shade; reseed readily; tolerate dry sites
<i>Trillium grandiflorum</i> <i>T. luteum</i> (native to NC, KY, etc.; naturalized in VA) Attractive red-flowered species: <i>T. erectum</i> (red trillium) & <i>T. sessile</i> (sessile trillium)	Great White Trillium Yellow Trillium	Light shade to part shade in rich, moist soil; only buy propagated plants
<i>Uvularia grandiflora</i> (smaller flowered species include <i>U. perfoliata</i> & <i>U. sessilifolia</i> [‘Variegata’]) Note: <i>Disporum lanuginosum</i> (yellow fairybells) is similar to the above species but more subtle in flower & grows more slowly	Large-flowered Bellwort, Great Merrybells	Light shade to part shade; add lime or gypsum to soil for <i>U. grandiflora</i>
<i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i> <i>V. gigantea</i>	New York Ironweed Tall Ironweed	Full sun to light shade; moist or wet sites; reseed readily (can get weedy)
<i>Viola canadensis</i> <i>V. pubescens</i> <i>V. striata</i> Note: <i>V. sororia</i> (common blue violet) is another durable species	Tall White Violet Yellow Violet Cream Violet	Light shade to part shade for most species (<i>V. striata</i> & <i>V. sororia</i> also like full sun in moist sites); reseed readily & many species spread by rhizomes or stolons: can be invasive in certain sites – naturalistic use best

<i>Zizia aptera</i>	Heartleaf Golden Alexanders	Full sun to light shade in dry or moist sites (<i>Z. aurea</i> can tolerate part shade & has finely divided foliage); some reseeding
<i>Z. aurea</i>	Common Golden Alexanders	

FERNS

<i>Adiantum pedatum</i>	Maidenhair Fern	Light shade to part shade; add gypsum or lime to the soil if soil is acid (likes calcium & tolerates alkaline soil [pH above 7])
<i>Athyrium felix-femina</i> subsp. <i>Asplenoides</i>	Lady Fern, Southern Lady Fern	Light shade to full shade; tolerates alkaline soil
<i>Cystopteris protrusa</i>	Woodland Fragile Fern, Lowland Bladder Fern	Light shade to full shade
<i>Dennstaedtia punctilobula</i>	Hay-scented Fern	Full sun (moist site) to part shade; tolerates relatively dry sites
<i>Deparia acrostichoides</i> (<i>Athyrium thelypteroides</i>)	Silvery Glade Fern	Light shade to part shade
<i>Diplazium</i> (<i>Athyrium</i>) <i>pycnocarpon</i>	Glade Fern	Light shade to full shade
<i>Dryopteris</i> × <i>boottii</i>	Boot's Wood Fern	Evergreen; light shade to part shade (probably tolerates full shade, as do many species in this genus)
<i>D. carthusiana</i>	Spinulose Wood Fern	Mostly evergreen; consistently moist sites
<i>D. celsa</i>	Log Fern	Semi-evergreen; moist or wet sites
<i>D. cristata</i>	Narrow Swamp Fern, Crested Wood Fern	Semi-evergreen to evergreen; moist or wet sites
<i>D. goldiana</i>	Goldie's Wood Fern	Moist sites best
<i>D. ludoviciana</i> (native to NC, etc.) & its hybrid <i>D. × australis</i> (<i>D. celsa</i> × <i>D. ludoviciana</i> ; this hybrid is a VA native)	Southern Wood Fern	Evergreen; moist or wet sites
<i>D. marginalis</i>	Marginal Wood Fern	Evergreen; tolerates alkaline soil; moist sites best but tolerates dry sites
<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>	Ostrich Fern	Light shade to full shade; tolerates wet sites & alkaline soil

<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	Sensitive Fern	Light shade to part shade; tolerates wet sites & alkaline soil
<i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i> var. <i>cinnamomea</i> (the common variety in VA – other var. is rare) <i>O. claytoniana</i> <i>O. regalis</i> (var. <i>spectabilis</i> is native to Virginia; another variety is native to Europe & Asia)	Cinnamon Fern Interrupted Fern Royal Fern	Light shade to full shade; moist or wet sites Light shade to part shade; moist sites; tolerates alkaline soil Light shade to part shade; moist or wet sites

<i>Phegopteris (Thelypteris) hexagonoptera</i>	Broad Beech Fern	Light shade to full shade
<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Christmas Fern	Evergreen; light shade to full shade; tolerates dry sites
<i>Thelypteris noveboracensis</i>	New York Fern	Light shade to part shade

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	River Oats	Full sun to part shade; reseeds readily in moist sites (can get weedy) – best for naturalistic use; tolerates dry sites
<i>Elymus hystrix (Hystrix patula)</i> Note: other species include <i>E. canadensis</i> (Canada wildrye) & <i>E. villosus</i> (hairy wildrye)	Bottlebrush Grass	Full sun (moist site) to part shade; tolerate dry sites; best for naturalistic use due to informal look; some reseeding

ORNAMENTAL SEDGES AND RUSHES

<i>Carex grayi</i>	Gray's Sedge	Light shade to part shade; needs moisture; some reseeding
<i>C. pensylvanica</i>	Pennsylvania Sedge	Full sun to full shade; tolerates dry sites; semi-evergreen; some reseeding
<i>C. plantaginea</i> Note: <i>C. shortiana</i> (short's sedge) is a lovely sedge that is rare in VA – likes moist soil	Plantainleaf Sedge	Light shade to part shade; evergreen; some reseeding
<i>Luzula acuminata</i>	Hairy Woodrush	Light shade to part shade in moist to moderately dry sites; evergreen; naturalistic use; some reseeding

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Developed by Brenda Skarphol, Curatorial Horticulturist at Green Spring Gardens Park, and Aleta Gadino, Virginia Native Plant Garden Intern. Updated 3-03.
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